

## IDAHO STATE JOURNAL

### Retiree recalled to fill ISU position

By Dan Boyd - Journal Writer

POCATELLO - When Ron McCune retired from Idaho State University in July 2004, he decided to keep an office on campus, just in case.

Less than a year later, his intuition is proving to be right on target as the veteran biochemist is on his way back to ISU as the interim vice president of health sciences starting July 1.

The position, approved by the State Board of Education in January, remained unfilled for five months due to the uncertainty surrounding the status of ISU President Richard Bowen.

McCune said he was "quite surprised" when approached by ISU administrators a month and a half ago about the possibility of manning the position and weighed the merits of the decision for several weeks before accepting.

"I really did intend to remain somewhat connected to and plugged into health sciences, but I had not anticipated anything like this would happen," he said.

But the temporary appointment of McCune does make obvious sense for several reasons.

With more than 30 years of experience at ISU, McCune knows the ins and outs of the institution like few others. And as the long-time chair of the Health Professions Advisory Committee, he's well aware of the importance of ISU's medical mission and has connections with other medical and dental schools around the country.

"I think it's clear ISU really wants to remain the lead institution in health sciences," McCune said. "It's clearly a broad-based feeling on campus."

McCune said he expects to fill the position on a part-time basis at least until Bowen retires in June 2006. At that time a full-time replacement will likely be named.

"I think his willingness to step up to the plate and do this on a part-time basis is a wonderful solution," said Linda Hatzenbuehler, dean of ISU's College of Health Professions. "He's very, very knowledgeable about all of the health professions and also very familiar with the entrance requirements."

Indeed, Hatzenbuehler cited McCune's experience advising students from all medical disciplines at ISU as one of the primary benefits of his selection.

When McCune assumes his duties on July 1, he will become the second interim vice president at ISU. Former Chief Research Officer Robert Wharton is currently serving as the interim Vice President of Academic Affairs.

The creation of the health sciences position in January was widely viewed as a precursor to the possible establishment of a medical school in Idaho.

McCune said that is still very much a real possibility, but emphasized the creation of a medical school is anything but a given.

"It's clear the state of Idaho is reaching a population size to make that (feasible)," he said. "The number of students that plan to be doctors and dentists has really increased in the last 20 years."

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